

Arson Prevention

The United Kingdom Fire and Rescue Service reported that from 2011 to 2012, more than 30 percent of the primary fires that they attended were deliberately caused. It is generally accepted that arson is the single largest cause of all fires in the UK.

Around 7,300 non-residential buildings were targeted in 2011/12

Premises at most risk

There were a total of 7,300 deliberate fires in 2011/12 in non-residential properties. The figures below show the proportion of fires in commercial premises that were the results of arson:

- Buildings providing recreational and cultural services - 40%
- **Schools - 32%**
- Agricultural premises - 31%
- Retail distribution centres - 25%
- Hospitals and healthcare practices - 22%
- **Preschool, higher education, and further education premises - 21%**
- Pubs and catering facilities - 17%
- Industrial premises - 15%

Over 53 per cent of those deliberate fires occurred in educational establishments.

How to protect your school

By following some simple steps you can minimise the chances of a deliberate fire occurring. You should start by carrying out a detailed fire risk assessment, and then take the necessary action to reduce the risks you identify. You should also consider ways to contain the fire, preventing the fire from spreading, and alerting the fire services.

Secure your building. Are door and window locks in working order? Is your outside storage and bin area secured? Is the site boundary secure? Ensure that there are no gaps around the doorways where lit paper could be pushed through. Consider fitting a fire proof letter box to the existing letter box, this will contain any lit material that could be posted through.

Limit the number of entrances in use. It's easier to keep track of people entering and vacating your building this way. However, it's important that you never block fire exits. Think of other potential entry routes (drain pipes, flat roofs, playing fields), and take measures to limit accessibility. Don't leave bins or other items available to assist anyone in climbing up on to the roof.

Be vigilant. Encourage your staff to report suspicious behaviour. It's also important that you're aware of who holds keys to the building(s) and that you follow up on any missing ones.

Keep rubbish and flammable materials securely stored. Keep your flammable liquids and gases under lock and key in an appropriate store.

Regularly check unoccupied areas for the accumulation of rubbish and combustible materials. Loose packaging and rubbish should be locked away until it can be safely disposed of. It's also advisable to have metal wheelie bins that come with a lock.

Further Advice

Further advice and information on arson prevention can be obtained from the following sources:

Shropshire Council
Crime Prevention Officer
01743 252819

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service
Fire Crime Officer
01743 260200

West Midlands Arson Task Force
<http://www.wmarsontaskforce.gov.uk/>

Fire Safety in Educational Premises Guide
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-educational-premises>